



This Republican Senate: A Record of Inaction, Obstruction and Government-By-Crisis

REPUBLICAN SENATE WORKED THE FEWEST DAYS OF ANY SENATE IN 60 YEARS

The Republican Senate Doesn't Work: Fewest Working Days Since 1955



Senate not in working session

During the summer of 2016, Republicans took a seven week recess. According to [Congressional record data](#), that is the longest summer recess of any Senate in decades.

That's not all. In 2016, this Republican Senate is on pace to work the fewest days of any Senate since the 1950s. Republicans are refusing to show up to work at a record pace.

JUDGES

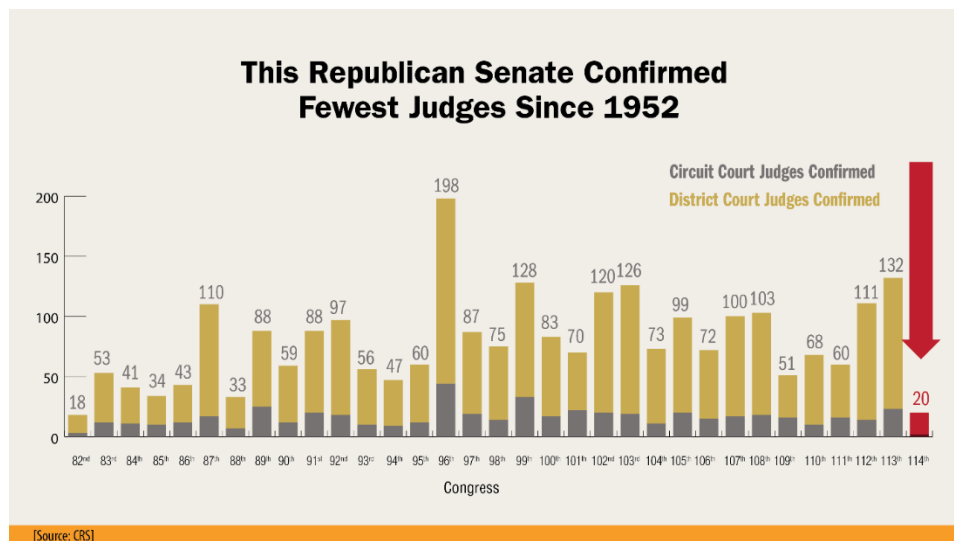
Supreme Court

Senate Republicans' obstruction of Chief Judge Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court is unprecedented. According to the non-partisan [Congressional Research Service](#), "of the six nominations made to vacancies that have existed during presidential election years since 1900, each was confirmed by the Senate." The respected Supreme Court experts at SCOTUSBlog [agreed](#) – "The historical record does not reveal any instances since at least 1900 of the president failing to nominate and/or the Senate failing to confirm a nominee in a presidential election year because of the impending election."

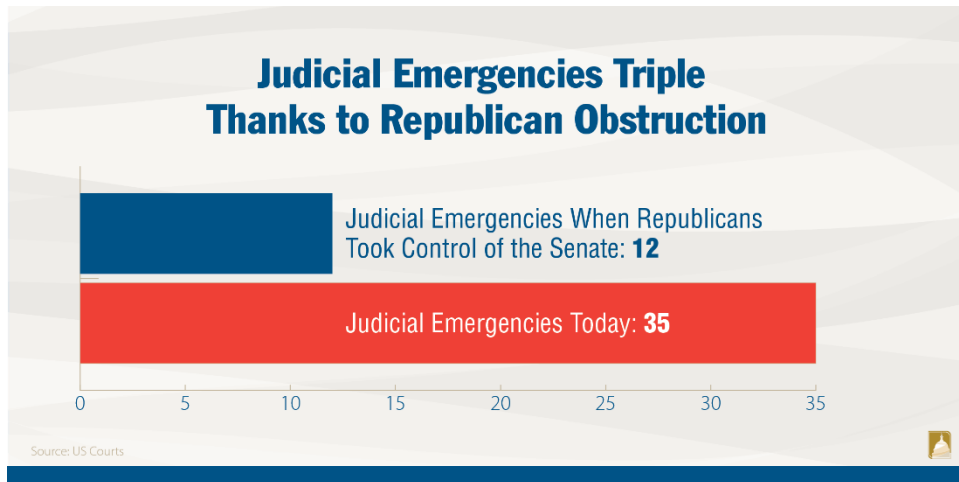
Now, Judge Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court has been waiting for a hearing for longer than any other nominee in modern history. Since 1949, every nomination to the Supreme Court received a hearing within 82 days. Judge Garland has already been waiting more than twice that long.

Circuit and District Court Judges

According to data from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, **this Republican Senate has confirmed the fewest circuit and district court judges of any Senate since the 1950s.** [[CRS](#)]

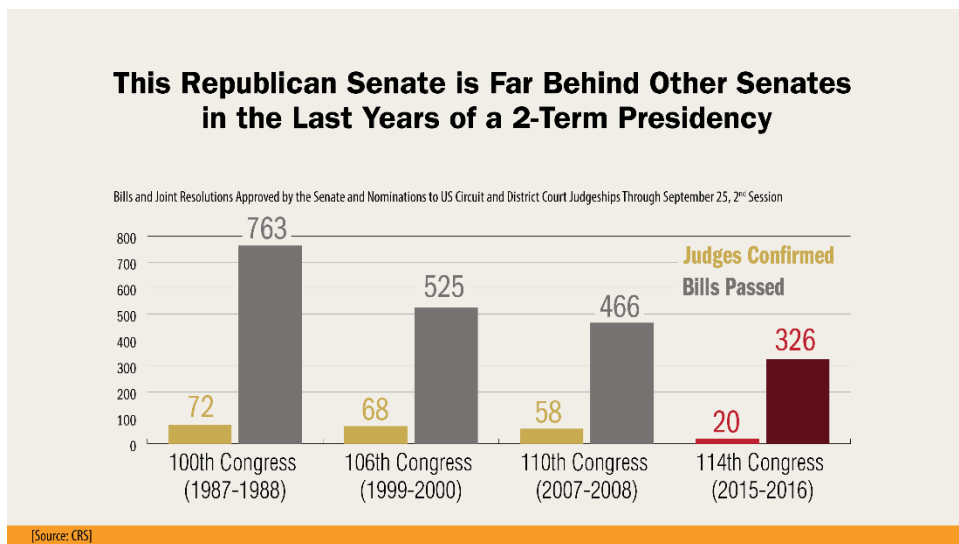


Because of Republican obstruction, the number of judicial emergencies has tripled. These judicial emergencies leave our courts overworked and deny many Americans the timely access to justice that they deserve. [[US Courts](#)]



BILLS PASSED

Despite claims of productivity, this Republican Senate has passed far fewer bills than other Congresses in the last term of a two-term presidency. This Senate has passed more than one hundred fewer bills than the 30-year average. [CRS]



REPUBLICANS REFUSE TO ACT ON KEY ISSUES FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Closing the Terror Gap. On two separate occasions, Senate Republicans voted against Senate Democrats' proposal to prevent those on terrorist watch lists from purchasing guns and explosives. [114th Congress, 1st Session, RCV 319, [12/3/15](#); 114th Congress, 2nd Session, RCV 106, [6/20/16](#)]

Refusing to Fix Our Broken Campaign Finance System. Again and again, Republicans have voted against commonsense reforms to fix our broken campaign finance system. The Senate Democrats' "We the People" agenda would make politicians more accountable by increasing campaign finance disclosure and reining in the flood of dark money from Super PACs and other special interests. [113th Congress, 2nd Session, RCV 261; [9/11/14](#); 114th Congress, 1st Session, RCV 26; [1/22/15](#); RCV 36, [1/28/15](#); RCV 107, [3/26/15](#); 114th Congress, 2nd Session, RCV 15, [2/2/16](#)]

Doing Nothing on Student Debt. Despite the crushing burden of student loan debt millions of Americans are struggling with, Senate Republicans have refused to do anything to help make college more affordable for middle class families. The In the Red Act would help put America on a path to debt free college by allowing borrowers to refinance their student loans, provide two free years of community college, and ensure that Pell Grants keep up with rising costs. Senate Republicans have voted against similar proposals in the past. [114th Congress – 1st Session, RCV 86, [3/25/15](#); 113th Congress – 2nd Session, RCV 185, [6/11/14](#)]

Refusing to Bring Up Criminal Justice Reform. We have more work to do to make sure that every American, regardless of race, community, or background can count on fair treatment, equal protection, and shared rights under the law. Despite the fact that the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act was reported out of the Judiciary Committee by a strong bipartisan vote over eight months ago, Republicans have failed to take up the bill or act to address any of these issues. Republicans admit they refuse to take up this critical effort because it is an election year. [NY Times, [9/17/16](#)]

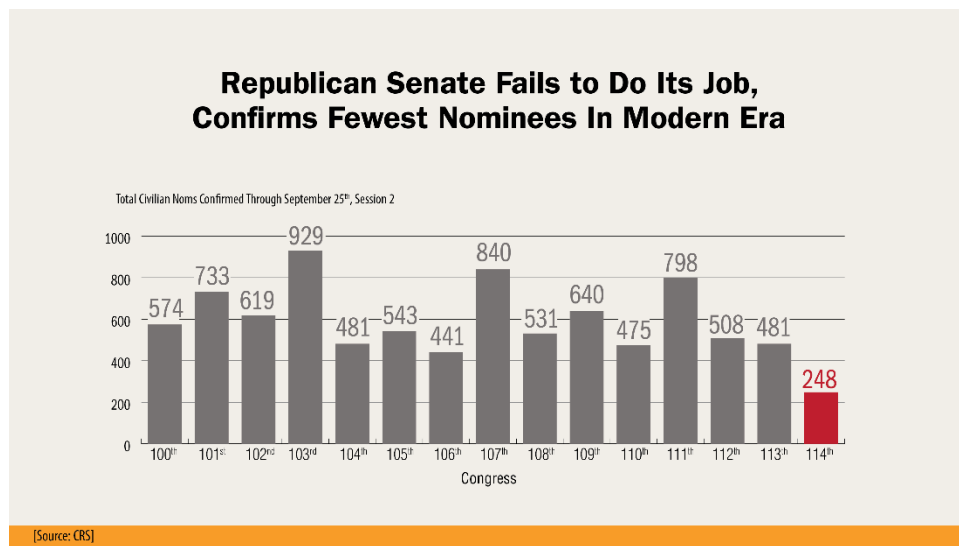
Shutting Down the Ex-Im Bank. Last year, Senate Republicans shut down the Export-Import Bank. Our nation's small businesses depend on the bank to support their exports to other companies. Now, Republicans refuse to confirm any nominee to the Ex-Im Bank, preventing the necessary quorum of 3 board members to authorize the bank to approve large loans and leaving American businesses in limbo and unable to secure the financing they need to grow. [Bloomberg, [6/30/15](#); NY Times, [6/28/16](#)]

Refusing to give millions of Americans a raise. Instead of helping lift millions of Americans out of poverty, Republicans have repeatedly blocked legislation that to raise the minimum wage. The Raise the Wage Act would raise the minimum wage to \$12 by 2020, increasing wages for 35 million Americans. [114th Congress, 1st Session, RCV 93, [3/26/15](#); 113th Congress, 2nd Session, RCV 117, [4/30/14](#); 110th Congress, 1st Session, RCV 23, [1/24/07](#); EPI, [5/7/15](#)]

Doing nothing on equal pay. More than 50 years after passage of the Equal Pay Act, women still only earn 80 cents on every dollar that a man does, and the gender pay gap persists across nearly all occupations. Despite the fact that the Paycheck Fairness Act would strengthen families and our economy by providing working women with the tools they need to close the gender wage gap, Senate Republicans have repeatedly blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act. [114th Congress, 1st Session, RCV 82, [3/24/15](#); 113th Congress, 2nd Session, RCV 262, [9/15/14](#); RCV 103, [4/9/14](#)]

CIVILIAN NOMINATIONS CONFIRMED

This Republican Senate has failed to do its job across the federal government. According to the Washington Post's [Catherine Rampell](#), "Empty offices pock the entire executive branch, too, thanks to unprecedented levels of Senate obstruction. This Congress, the Senate has confirmed the fewest civilian nominees in modern history, according to a recent report from the Congressional Research Service. As of mid-September, just 248 nominees had been confirmed. That's, again, half the average number confirmed over comparable periods in the final Congresses of other recent two-term presidents."





The Republican Senate's Legacy of Broken Promises

PROMISE: REPUBLICAN SENATE "MEANS WORKING MORE"

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): "The first thing I need to do is to get the Senate back to normal. That means working more. I don't think we've had any votes on Friday in anybody's memory. It means opening the Senate up so that amendments are permitted on both sides." [Press Conference, 11/5/14]

BROKEN: REPUBLICAN SENATE IS WORKING THE FEWEST DAYS OF ANY SENATE IN 60 YEARS

The Republican Senate Doesn't Work: Fewest Working Days Since 1955

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During the summer of 2016, Republicans took a seven week recess. According to [Congressional record data](#), that is the longest summer recess of any Senate in decades.

That's not all. In 2016, this Republican Senate is on pace to work the fewest days of any Senate since the 1950s. Republicans are refusing to show up to work at a record pace.

Republicans have taken their historic inaction to a new low, refusing to even hold a hearing for President Obama's nominee to the Supreme Court, Merrick Garland.

PROMISE: REPUBLICANS WILL FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE CLASS

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): "Let's pass legislation that focuses on jobs and the real concerns of the Middle Class." [Floor Remarks, [1/7/15](#)]

BROKEN: REPUBLICANS HAVE BLOCKED LEGISLATION TO HELP THE MIDDLE CLASS

Again and again, Republicans have [voted against](#) measures to improve the lives of middle class Americans. Senate Republicans voted against equal pay for equal work, allowing borrowers to reduce the burden of student debt by refinancing their loans at lower interest rates, protecting Medicare and Social Security, expanding pre-k, ending tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, and increasing the minimum wage. Even some Republicans acknowledge that Republicans haven't done anything on the big issues facing Americans.

Sen. David Perdue (R-GA): "When I go home ... people are saying, 'Yeah, you did some things, but what about these big issues?'" [Politico, [5/2/16](#)]

PROMISE: REPUBLICANS ARE "NOT GOING TO ENGAGE IN EXERCISES IN FUTILITY"

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): "We're not going to engage in exercises in futility." [AP, [9/16/15](#)]

BROKEN: AGAIN AND AGAIN, REPUBLICANS FORCED REPEAT SHOW VOTES WHEN THE SENATE HAS ALREADY VOTED

Politico noted in 2015 "[Mitch McConnell is on course to set a record in legislative futility](#)." Instead of reversing course and ending the useless repeat show votes, Senator McConnell doubled down, wasting the Senate's time again and again.

Senate Republicans regularly waste time on show votes, even when the Senate has already voted. On eight separate measures, Senate Republicans have forced repeat failed cloture votes instead of working with Democrats to negotiate a bipartisan compromise. On the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill, Republicans did this four separate times in an effort to force the deportation of DREAMers – individuals brought to this country as children and who have always called America home. Eventually, Republicans stopped with the show votes and passed a clean bill.

Again and again, Republicans wasted time with partisan attacks on Planned Parenthood. Even after the Republican Leader acknowledged that trying to defund Planned Parenthood was an “exercise in futility,” he [continued to attack it](#). Democrats continue to fight Republicans’ attacks on women’s health.

PROMISE: REPUBLICANS WILL END DYSFUNCTION

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): “Yes, well, I’m not sure he’s going to sign everything, but we’re going to function. We are. We’re going to pass legislation. Some of it he may not like but we’re going to function. This gridlock and dysfunction can be ended. It can be ended by having a senate that actually works.” [Press Conference, 11/5/14]

BROKEN: BY REFUSING TO ACT ON QUALIFIED JUDICIAL NOMINEES, REPUBLICANS ARE INCREASING DYSFUNCTION

Senate Republicans have created an entirely new level of dysfunction in Washington. Even though Republicans admit that President Obama’s nominee to the Supreme Court, Chief Judge Merrick Garland, is [eminently qualified](#), they refuse to treat him fairly. Many Republicans even refused to meet with Chief Judge Garland.

But it’s not just the highest court in the land. **Republicans have waged a campaign of historic obstruction of our nation’s justice system.** Republicans confirmed the fewest Circuit Court Judges since at least 1945. Republicans confirmed the fewest District Court Judges Since 1952. Because of Republican obstruction, judicial emergencies have tripled since January 2015. [[CRS](#); [US Courts](#)]

Republicans have confirmed the fewest civilian nominations since at least 1988. [[CRS](#)]

What have Republicans done instead? Not much. This Republican Senate has passed far fewer bills than other Congresses in the last term of a two-term President and more than a hundred less than the 30-year average. Republicans refused to fix our broken campaign finance system; Republicans did nothing to address student loan debt; and Republicans refused to raise the minimum wage [[CRS](#)]

PROMISE: REPUBLICANS WILL PASS A BUDGET “EVERY YEAR”

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): “We would be passing a budget. “Every year,” he added. [The Hill, [1/25/12](#)]

BROKEN: IN 2016, REPUBLICANS DIDN’T EVEN TRY TO PASS A BUDGET

In 2016, Republicans failed to pass a budget. In the past, Senate Republicans called the failure to pass a budget a “[national scandal](#)” and said passing a budget was a “fundamental responsibility.” But in 2016, Republicans refused to even try to pass a budget. As Politico reported in April, “[Republicans said](#) they’d make the budget a top priority when they took power — but now some of them want to abandon the process altogether.”

PROMISE: REPUBLICANS WILL PASS ALL TWELVE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): “But we intend to do next year is pass each of the 12 bills that fund the government separately.” [Fox News, [12/4/14](#)]

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): “We've already agreed that what we're going to spend next year in our continuing effort to end dysfunction in Congress, which we made a huge step forward on in 2015, **I think we ought to on a bipartisan basis step up to the challenge of getting every single bill that funds the government passed individually**, not in a big clump of bills at the end, and get it on the president's desk.” [ABC This Week, [1/10/16](#)]

BROKEN: BY PLAYING GAMES WITH THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS, REPUBLICANS ENSURED DYSFUNCTION

Republicans' partisan games and long breaks ensured the Senate would not have time to pass all twelve appropriations bills. [Early on in the appropriations process in 2015](#), Democrats [called on Republicans](#) to work with us to ensure that the military and middle class priorities would receive fair treatment during the appropriations process. Instead, [Republicans wasted months by refusing to negotiate](#) and by insisting on budget gimmicks. Once Republicans finally came to the table, the only option was to pass omnibus appropriations bills. [Republicans played the](#) same partisan games in 2016, then took the longest recess in modern history, leaving Congress no option but to pass a continuing resolution and punt the appropriations process until the lame duck session.

PROMISE: SENATE REPUBLICANS WILL NOT BLOCK AMENDMENTS BY “FILLING THE TREE”

Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY): “But you process a number of amendments, particularly the ones that are the most significant to both sides, and you move to a completion of the bill. I’ve never said I would never fill up the tree but I think it ought to be an exception rather than the rule, and that we ought to give members an opportunity to participate.” [Roll Call, [12/8/14](#)]

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA): “The ability to block Senators from offering amendments is actually not found in the Senate rules. **Filling the tree is an abuse of Senate precedents.** In some ways that makes it the easier problem to address; whereas, a cloture abuse is an abuse of the Senate cloture rule. The practice of filling the tree to block amendments can be eliminated simply by establishing a new precedent.” [Floor Remarks, [3/12/14](#)]

BROKEN: MCCONNELL FILLED AMENDMENT TREE MORE THAN ANY OTHER REPUBLICAN LEADER IN HISTORY

In his single term as majority leader, Sen. McConnell has filled the amendment tree 17 times, more than every other Republican leader, according to the non-partisan Congressional Research Service.

Filling the amendment tree is a procedural technique used by Senate leaders to prevent amendments and move a legislative measure closure to passage without changes. Senate Republicans previously called filling the tree an “abuse of Senate precedents” and a “gag rule.” Republicans committed that filling the tree would be the “exception rather than the rule.” They have not kept that commitment.



The Republican Senate is Working ... for the Koch Brothers

REPUBLICANS VOTED AGAINST A COMPROMISE TO KEEP GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF THOSE ON THE NO FLY LIST

After months blocking every attempt to keep guns out of the hands of known or suspected terrorists, Senate Republicans took their obstruction a step further by blocking an up-or-down vote on the Collins-Heitkamp amendment. The amendment has the support of a majority of the Senate – but Republicans refuse to give it a fair up-or-down vote.

Republicans Overwhelmingly Opposed the Collins-Heitkamp Amendment to Keep Guns Out of the Hands of Individuals on the No-Fly List and the Selectee List. [114th Congress, 2nd Session, [RCV 109](#)]

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

Heritage Action: “Heritage Action opposes the Collins Amendment and will include it as a key vote on our legislative scored.” [Key Vote Alert, [6/23/16](#)]

National Rifle Association Executive Director Chris Cox: “Unfortunately, Senator Collins and others are focusing their efforts on unconstitutional proposals that would not have prevented the Orlando terrorist attack.” [WSJ, [6/21/16](#)]

REPUBLICANS OPPOSE RULE PROTECTING AMERICANS’ RETIREMENT SAVINGS

The Department of Labor’s “Fiduciary Rule” will ensure that financial advisers work in the best interests of their clients, not just their own bottom line. In May, Republicans voted against this commonsense protection because the Koch brothers opposed it.

Republicans Vote Against Commonsense Rule Protecting Americans Retirement Savings [114th Congress, 2nd Session, [RCV 84](#)]

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

Americans for Prosperity: “We urge you to vote YES on H.J. Res. 88 to overturn the DOL’s fiduciary rule. Americans for Prosperity will include this vote in our congressional scorecard.” [Key Vote Alert, [5/23/16](#)]

REPUBLICANS PUSHED A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN OVER INTERNET TRANSITION

Republicans and the Koch brothers pushed [false claims](#) over a long-planned clerical transition of the internet in an attempt to shut down the government. This transition has been planned for decades under [administrations of both parties](#).

Roll Call: The GOP Turnabout on the Internet Transition. “Some of the top Republican lawmakers who pushed to delay a long-planned transition of internet oversight, which will give an international group of stakeholders control over the web’s address system, weren’t always so wary of the hand-over. The chairmen of the Commerce committees, John Thune of South Dakota and Fred Upton of Michigan, are among those raising questions about the handoff — a Commerce Department agency currently oversees the address system — even though they previously supported a bill that would have given Congress time to review the transition agreement, but not require lawmakers’ approval.” [Roll Call, [9/22/16](#)]

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

Americans for Limited Government: “Congress must act by defunding it once again in the appropriations process, and getting an injunction is necessary if NTIA moves in the direction of transition on August 15 when it is expected they will not announce any contract renewal with the current government vendor over the IANA function, ICANN.” [Press Release, [8/11/16](#)]

REPUBLICANS BLOCKED AMERICAN JOBS

Because the Republican Senate refuses to confirm nominees to the Ex-Im Bank, Americans, the economy, and small businesses have all suffered tremendously because Ex-Im cannot extend significant capital to American businesses. Without a full board Ex-Im cannot authorize funding loans over a certain size, thereby tying the Banks's hands in supporting American businesses.

Morning Consult: Shelby Won't Budge on Export-Import Bank Nominee. "I'm fundamentally opposed to that," Shelby told Morning Consult. "The majority of the Republican caucus is against that - it's corporate welfare." [Morning Consult, [4/14/16](#)]

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

Americans for Prosperity Vice President Brent Gardner: "Without another board member, the bank can't approve transactions over \$10 million-meaning big businesses won't

be able to gouge the American taxpayer like they have for decades. Congress should stand strong and refuse to let the Ex-Im Bank get back to business as usual." [The Hill, [4/13/16](#)]

REPUBLICANS BLOCKED COMMON-SENSE TAXPAYER PROTECTIONS

Despite numerous loopholes that allow some tax preparers to cheat Americans out of their hard-earned income, Congressional Republicans continue to block essential legislation that would provide every American strong protections against tax scams. Legislation offered by Senate Democrats would require that any tax preparer meet minimum standards to protect against fraudulent and incompetent tax services. Unfortunately, Congressional Republicans - at the request of organizations funded by the Koch Brothers - blocked these common-sense reforms.

Senate Democrats offered legislation to close these loopholes and protect taxpayers - but Republicans blocked the bills in the Finance Committee.

Consumer groups and industry professionals supported Senator Wyden's legislation to create minimum standards for all tax preparers [Letter to Finance Committee, 4/19/2016]
13 Republicans voted against these common-sense provisions in the Finance Committee [Senate Finance, [4/20/16](#)]

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

Koch-Funded Institute for Justice: "Tax-preparer licensing is protectionist and anti-competitive." [Daily Signal, [12/29/15](#)]

REPUBLICANS BLOCKED RENEWABLE ENERGY TAX PROVISIONS

Among the amendments proposed to the FAA bill, Section 48C allocates a tax credit for the investment in advanced renewable energy manufacturing projects and facilities pertaining to biomass, geothermal, and fuel cells. These bills were left out of the omnibus funding bill at the end of 2015 due to a Republican drafting error. Senate Republicans blocked these provisions from going through.

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

Americans for Prosperity, a Koch funded advocacy organization, urged Senate Republicans to oppose extending the renewable tax provisions. [NTU Letter, [4/5/16](#); Politico, [4/11/16](#)]

REPUBLICANS SUPPORTED UNDERMINING OUR NATIONAL TREASURES

The Antiquities Act is crucial for conservation efforts across the country. In February, Republicans voted to weaken the Antiquities Act by supporting an amendment from Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) that would have undermined the president's ability to declare national monuments.

Republicans Voted For Amendment Undermining the Antiquities Act [114th Congress, 2nd Session, [RCV 10](#)]

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

American Energy Alliance: “We urge all Senators to vote YES on SA 3126, the Lee Antiquities Act amendment.” [Key Vote Alert, [2/2/16](#)]

REPUBLICANS KEEP VOTING AGAINST THE CLEAN WATER PLAN

Senate Republicans have voted repeatedly to undermine the President's Clean Water Rule (WOTUS), which would protect the drinking water of 117 million Americans.

This week, the Senate voted on an amendment to the FY17 Energy & Water appropriations bill that would block the President's Clean Water Rule from moving forward. [114th Congress, 2nd Session, [RCV 57](#)]

Last November, Senate Republicans voted against clean water twice. [114th Congress, 1st Session, [RCV 295](#); [RCV 296](#)]

BECAUSE THE KOCH BROTHERS SAY NO

Heritage Foundation: The Heritage Foundation pushed policy riders to last year's FY16 appropriations bill, issuing materials saying that "Congress should prohibit the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from expending any funds to implement the WOTUS rule, which is an attack on property rights and a power grab that seeks to regulate almost all waters." [Heritage Foundation, [12/4/15](#)]

Americans for Prosperity: The Koch Brothers political arm, Americans for Prosperity, wrote a letter to Congressional members strongly opposing the President's clean water rule. [Americans For Prosperity, [7/17/15](#)]

American Petroleum Institute: Koch Brothers backed American Petroleum Institute, big oil's main advocacy group, signed a letter to Congressional members urging them to pass legislation that would require the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the Clean Water Rule. [Waters Advocacy Coalition, [4/29/15](#)]

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